

## TOWN OF BOXFORD

*Office of the Board of Selectmen*

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

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May 19, 2006

Andrea Nixon  
Clerk, Cable Television Division  
Department of Telecommunications and Energy  
One South Station  
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Clerk,

The Town of Boxford would like to register its strong opposition to Verizon's March 16, 2006, rulemaking petition filed with the Cable Division of the Department of Telecommunications and Energy. Verizon's petition proposes extremely unreasonable new rules for initial cable licensing. Boxford has been deep into negotiations with Verizon for many months. Boxford is one of the communities that has been surprised and frustrated by Verizon's unwillingness to negotiate in a cooperative and collaborative manner. Boxford is one of many communities in the Commonwealth currently engaged in ongoing good faith negotiations that Verizon is attempting to evade through this proposed regulatory change.

Boxford is ardently supportive of creating a competitive environment for cable services for our residents. We were anxiously anticipating fast municipal licensing. A group of dedicated, experienced community volunteers were authorized to negotiate on the Town's behalf. We further authorized scarce municipal funds to engage the services of a professional expert negotiator in this field. However, Verizon's negotiating tactics have made the process extraordinarily difficult.

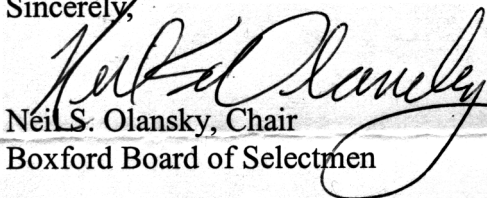
As only one example of many problems we have encountered, we relate the following testimony of our experience with license formatting: Early in the process, Boxford proposed a draft license in the format typical of the other cable licenses in communities throughout Massachusetts. Verizon rejected this document and insisted on a format utilized by them in other states that they claimed more appropriately reflected their unique position in the marketplace. In the interest of engendering competition, we complied. At great expense we rapidly prepared our comments in Verizon's preferred format and

eagerly awaited the continuation of negotiations. Several weeks went by with NO RESPONSE from Verizon. Eventually Verizon did respond by resubmitting their original license ignoring ALL of our comments and requests. Five months into the negotiating process, we had achieved nothing.

Municipal officials who are responsible for implementing licensing and who are accountable to the public are in opposition to these proposed rules. Municipal officials are concerned that under the proposed rules, our community and cities and towns across the state will be boxed into an untenable 30 day post-hearing licensing process, and will lose the ability to properly review and negotiate Verizon cable proposals. This is not even close to what is reasonably needed for a fair and reasonable licensing process. The Massachusetts Cable Division should reject the Verizon petition and allow local officials to continue serving their constituents as they have been doing for decades.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Boxford eagerly awaits the opportunity to comment and provide further testimony to DTE as you may require. We believe our experience clearly demonstrates the overwhelming need for the DTE to summarily reject the proposed regulatory change.

Sincerely,



Neil S. Olansky, Chair  
Boxford Board of Selectmen

cc: Boxford Cable Committee  
Representative Bradley Hill  
Representative Barbara L'Italien  
Senator Bruce Tarr